

U.S. Representative Sanford Bishop issued this statement Tuesday night (1/28) following President Bush's State of the Union address:

"While I thought the President's speech was well delivered and at times uplifting, he fell short of making a convincing case for his economic stimulus and budget plans and still left us with uncertainties about Iraq even while laying out strong circumstantial evidence of non-compliance.

"On the underlying principles, we stand together. We agree Saddam should be held accountable, hopefully through peaceful means; that we should vigorously fight terrorism; that we should enact fair and fiscally responsible tax cuts to stimulate the economy, and that we should work together to fund the country's priority needs- which means adequate funding to strengthen defense and homeland security and maintain the nation's infrastructure and human resources safety net, while keeping the budget deficit as low as possible. I support many of the goals he cited, and will continue working for such needs as meaningful prescription drug help for seniors, faith-based social services, energy self-sufficiency, environmental improvements, the fight against poverty and disease, and efforts to truly protect and strengthen Medicare.

"But I remain concerned about some of the specific proposals and policies he has embraced to deal with the critical challenges-- the same concerns expressed by a majority of the people in my area of southwest Georgia who have given me their views in person or by letter, email, and telephone.

"We're concerned about his massive economic stimulus plan, which features \$674 billion in tax cuts over 10 years. As designed, it would do relatively little to create jobs right now, and would potentially leave the country with a budget deficit exceeding \$200 billion and severe cuts in vitally important federal programs. While striving to finance the \$647 billion tax cut plan, the Administration has already withheld support this year for funding to meet urgent homeland security needs and provide drought relief to hard-hit farmers, something that would help stabilize the reeling economy in rural areas. The tax cut plan targets 40 percent of the benefits to the wealthiest 1 percent among us, promising cuts averaging \$30,127 to taxpayers making \$373,000 and \$289 to average working families. An analysis shows it would provide only about \$59 billion in the economy this year, creating no more than 190,000 jobs.

"We can do much better. In fact, an alternative plan has emerged in Congress that would target more of the benefits to working families and small businesses and would have an estimated \$136 billion economic impact, creating more than a million new jobs. After losing 2.4 million private-sector jobs over the past two years, the country cannot afford a stimulus plan that fails to meet today's challenge. As one of the hardest hit states, Georgia can afford it least of all.

"We're also concerned about going to war prematurely. The President, along with as many of our allies as possible, is right to demand compliance with the Gulf War cease fire agreement. But now that the President has succeeded in reestablishing inspections in Iraq, we should give that process a real chance. Inspections might not be the answer. But war is terribly costly in terms of lost lives, human suffering, and the burden of debt it imposes on taxpayers, and it just makes sense to give peace a chance. We should demand compliance, and in the process we should uphold the nation's standing in the world by making sure the U.S. is perceived as a

peacemaker and not an aggressor.

"I stand united with the President on many goals and aspirations. At the same time, I join with many people in Georgia and throughout the country in supporting policies that promote peace, security, and economic recovery right now."